

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /117 W

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R 291913Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5878

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2303

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: PERON MEETS WITH FREJULI LEADERS

1. SUMMARY: IN OBVIOUS FOLLOW-UP TO MEETING WITH LEADERS OPPOSITION PARTIES, PERON ON MAR 28 MET AND EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH LEADERS OF FREJULI PARTIES. THEY DIRECTED CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM AT SOME OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. PERON AGREED TO CONTINUE MEETING WITH THEM AT LEAST ONCE EVERY MONTH. END SUMMARY.

2. PERON MET WITH LEADERS OF FREJULI PARTIES MAR 28 TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON CURRENT ECON-POLITICAL SITUATION. INTERESTINGLY, IN OPENING REMARKS PERON REITERATED THESIS THAT NO SINGLE PERSON WOULD BE DESIGNATED AS HIS HEIR, RATHER, COUNTRY WOULD BE HEIR. HE ALSO INDICATED THERE WOULD BE CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POLICIES BEGINNING IN JUNE--THOUGH HE DID NOT SPECIFY WHAT THEY MIGHT ENTAIL.

3. SPEAKING FOR LEADERS OF MINORITY PARTIES, ARTURO FRONDIZI (MID) AFFIRMED THAT GOVT HAD INDEED PRODUCED POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT--E.G., THERE WAS NOW CONSENSUS AND DIALOGUE WHICH HAD NEVER EXISTED BEFORE. HOWEVER THERE WERE NEGATIVE ASPECTS ALSO: (A) VIOLENCE HAD NOT DECLINED; (B) THERE IS NO NEW FOREIGN
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INVESTMENT; AND (C) AGRICULTURAL SECTOR SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN

FOROGTTEN IN ECONOMIC PLANS.

4. PERON REPLIED WITH USUAL LINE THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WITHIN NORMAL FRAMEWORK BEING DONE TO COMBAT TERRORISM, BUT THAT STATE OF SIEGE OR OTHER MEASURES WHICH MIGHT INTERFERE WITH PROGRAMS OF RECONSTRUCTION WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. ON ABSENCE OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, HE RATHER LAMELY EXPLAINED THAT THERE HAD BEEN OFFERS OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT, BUT GOVT WISHED TO CONSOLIDATE INTERNAL MARKETS AND GUARANTEE PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL CAPITAL BEFORE ACCEPTING THEM AT LEAST ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, PERON DID NOT EVEN TRY TO EXPLAIN WHY AGRICULTURAL SECTOR GIVEN SHORT SHRIFT IN PLANNING.

5. DESPITE NEGATIVE NOTES, TONE OF MEETING WAS DESCRIBED AS EXTREMELY CORDIAL AND PARTY LEADERS SUBSEQUENTLY PRONOUNCED WHOLE EXERCISE VERY POSITIVE. IT WAS DECIDED TO HOLD SIMILAR MEETINGS ON REGULAR BASIS ONCE EVERY MONTH.

6. OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANCE WAS FACT THAT NEITHER PERON NOR ANY OF HIS INTERLOCUTORS RAISED QUESTION OF HIS RUMORED TRIP ABROAD. PERON HIMSELF APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS.

7. COMMENT: IT IS HEALTHY SIGN THAT MECHANISM OF CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-CRITICISM IS DEVELOPING IN FREJULI AND THAT LEADERS OF NON-PERONIST PARTIES ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION SOME OF GOVT'S POLICIES. SHOULD PERON BE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON VIEWS AND ADVICE OF MEMBERS OF PALACE GUARD SUCH AS LOPEZ REGA, THERE WOULD BE LITTLE CHANCE THAT GOVT MIGHT BEGIN TO TAKE CORRECTIVE MEASURES WITH RESPECT TO SOME OF ITS MISTAKEN POLICIES.
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